

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 02280 171522Z

ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4287

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2280

NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR TOON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SHUM, CSCE, UR, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO SAKHAROV

REF: SECTO 2016

1. IN ACCORD WITH REFTEL, EMBOFF (COMBS) TELEPHONED SAKHAROV MORNING OF FEBRUARY 17 AND SUGGESTED HE MIGHT WISH TO COME TO EMBASSY LATER THAT DAY; SAKHAROV AGREED TO COME AT 3:30 P.M.

2. UPON HIS ARRIVAL WE DELIVERED PRESIDENT'S LETTER. SAKHAROV EXPRESSED THANKS AND SAID HE PLANNED TO HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT 7:00 P.M. THAT EVENING, FEBRUARY 17, AT WHICH HE WOULD ANNOUNCE FULL TEXT OF PRESIDENT'S LETTER. HE SAID HE WOULD ALSO RELEASE TEXT OF A NEW LETTER, DATED FEBRUARY 17, WHICH FORMALLY RESPONDS TO PRESIDENT'S LETTER. TEXT OF SAKHAROV'S NEW LETTER FOLLOWS. SUBSTANCE OF OTHER COMMENTS SAKHAROV MADE DURING FEBRUARY 17 MEETING REPORTED SEPTTEL.

3. REGARDING LINE TO BE TAKEN WITH PRESS, IF SAKHAROV REVEALS THAT HE RECEIVED THE LETTER VIA EMBASSY, WE PLAN ONLY TO CONFIRM THAT EMBASSY TRANSMITTED LETTER. WE WILL NOT COMMENT FURTHER.
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IF SAKHAROV REVEALS THAT HE GAVE EMBASSY HIS REPLY TO PRESIDENT, WE WILL MERELY CONFIRM. WE PLAN TO ANSWER ANY OTHER QUESTIONS WITH NO COMMENT.

4. BEGIN TEXT. DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: YOUR LETTER OF FEBRUARY 6 (SIC), WHICH I RECEIVED TODAY, REPRESENTS A GREAT HONOR FOR ME AND SUPPORT FOR THE SINGLE MOVEMENT FOR HUMAN

RIGHTS IN THE USSR AND THE COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE,
A MOVEMENT IN WHICH WE CONSIDER OURSELVES TO BE A PART.
YOU AFFIRMED IN THIS LETTER, JUST AS YOU HAD DONE EARLIER,
IN YOUR INAUGURAL ADDRESS AND OTHER STATEMENTS, THE DEVOTION
OF THE NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION TO THE PRINCIPLES OF
DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. OF
PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE IS YOUR STRIVING
TO FACILITATE THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS OF
CONSCIENCE.

I WROTE, IN MY CONGRATULATORY TELEGRAM ON THE
OCCASIN OF YOUR ELECTION, OF THE DEEP RESPECT WHICH
YOUR POSITION EVOKES IN US. I HAVE FREQUENTLY WRITTEN
AND SAID THAT THE DEFENSE OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS
IS NOT INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER
COUNTRIES, BUT IS ONE OF THE MOST CENTRAL ELEMENTS IN
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, INSEPARABLE FROM THE BASIC
PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND PROGRESS. TODAY, HAVING RECEIVED
YOUR LETTER, THE EXCEPTIONAL NATURE OF WHICH I CLEARLY
UNDERSTAND, I CAN ONLY ONCE AGAIN REPEAT THIS.

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OCCASION TO REFER
TO CONCRETE CASES, IN PARTICULAR THE FATE OF THOSE
PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE ABOUT WHICH I WROTE YOU IN
JANUARY. ONE OF THEM, SERGEY KOVALEV, HAS A DANGEROUS
TUMOR. I ASK YOU TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF HIS IMMEDIATE
TRANSFER TO THE PRISON HOSPITAL IN LENINGRAD. I ONCE
AGAIN UNDERSCORE THE ARBITRARY NATURE OF SINGLING OUT NAMES
OF PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE. I FEEL I DO NOT HAVE
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THE RIGHT TO MAKE SUCH A SELECTION. THE FATE OF MANY,
MANY POLITICAL PRISONERS REQUIRES THE SAME KIND OF CLOSE
ATTENTION.

FOUR MEMBERS OF THE GROUP TO FACILITATE FULFILLMENT
OF THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT WERE ARRESTED IN FEBRUARY--
ALEKSANDR GINZBURG, MIKOLA RUDENKO, OLEKSA TIKHIY, AND
THE GROUP'S LEADER, YURIY ORLOV. THEIR ARREST IS A
CHALLENGE TO ALL GOVERNMENTS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE
HELSINKI MEETING. I ASK THAT YOU INTERCEDE FOR THE
RELEASE ON BAIL OR UNDER GUARANTEE OF GINSBURG AND RUDENKO,
BOTH OF WHOM ARE ILL. THE ACTIVE EFFORTS OF THE HEADS
OF STATE OF ALL HELSINKI-SIGNATORY COUNTRIES ARE REQUIRED
SO THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP CAN BE FREED, SO AS TO
ENABLE IT TO CONTINUE ITS IMPORTANT WORK.

FROM FOREIGN RADIO BROADCASTS I LEARNED THAT
YOU HAVE EXPRESSED A WISH TO MEET WITH ME, IF I TRAVEL
TO THE U.S.A. I APPRECIATE VERY MUCH THIS INVITATION.

I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT SUCH A TRIP AND SUCH PERSONAL
CONTACTS COULD HAVE EXTRAORDINARY SIGNIFICANCE.
UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, AT THE PRESENT TIME I SEE NO
POSSIBILITY FOR A TRIP OF THIS SORT.

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THE
EFFORTS OF PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL, YOUR PERSONAL EFFORTS,
MR. PRESIDENT, WILL ASSIST IN THE REALIZATION OF
THOSE HIGH AIMS ABOUT WHICH YOU WROTE IN YOUR LETTER TO
ME.

WITH DEEP RESPECT, SINCERELY, ANDREY SAKHAROV
MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 17, 1977
MOSCOW, UL. CHKALOVA NO. 48, APT. 68; 227-27-20; 561-70-17.
END TEXT.
TOON

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